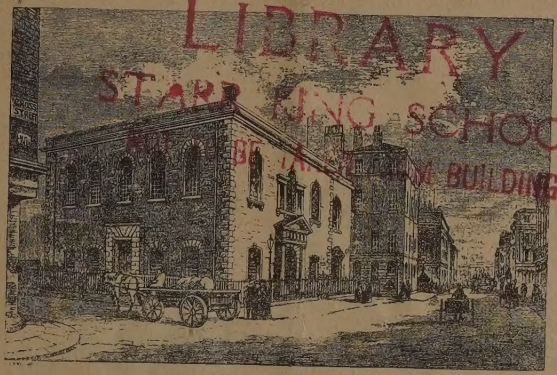
No. 640 Twopence February, 1957

THE UNITARIAN

A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS



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BUILDING

CROSS STREET CHAPEL TO REBUILD

The picture above is from an engraving of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, as it was a century or more ago. It was destroyed in 1940. Plans are now ready for a new chapel, and in our March issue, Dr. R. W. Wilde, minister of the chapel, will describe them, showing the architect's drawing for the new building.

"VISITING SUNDAY"

How to overcome isolation

Some Unitarians have acquired the reputation of knowing all about their own place of worship but never showing any interest in other Unitarian congregations or organisations. An annual "Visiting Sunday" has been for some of them an introduction to a larger outlook with a wider religious horizon.

The idea was born in Ireland some thirty years ago, when York Street Church, Belfast, organised a congregational visit to a country "non-subscribing" church. York Street was then in the early years of its remarkable revival under the leadership of the Rev. A. L. Agnew, and perhaps the majority of its members were new to the liberal faith of our non-subscribing and Unitarian churches. They chartered motor coaches, packed up lunches, and rode off into the country to join in worship at a historic meeting house; then had lunch together, explored the buildings and the neighbourhood under the friendly guidance of their hosts, and returned to Belfast in time for a congregational tea, and evening service in their own church. Great stress was laid upon the "home" service in the evening. It was pointed out to members that this was much more than a holiday trip to the

country. It was a congregational visit, a gesture of friendship and common loyalty; and loyalty to the home church was a most important factor in religion. So if, for once no morning service was held in the home church, everyone would make it a point of honour to finish the day at the service there.

That was the beginning. Dr. Agnew went to preach at Pendleton Unitarian Free Church during a visit to England, and when the members heard about York Street's experiment in denominational fellowship, they decided to imitate. Their first visit was to Dean Row Chapel on a day that turned horribly wet. A continuous downpour prevented any attempt at a country ramble in the afternoon so games were organised in the schoolroom (in those days there was a separate Sunday School building). Nevertheless the hospitality of the Wilmslow friends and the day's fellowship was so much appreciated. that there was no doubt that "Visiting Sunday" must become an annual event.

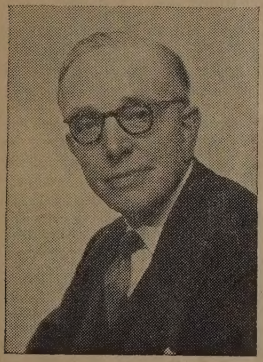
So it did. Without a break, even in the difficult war-time years, Pendleton congregation have made an annual visit, and as motor coach hire became easier, further distances were covered. At first, so that the poorer families might have a chance to join the party, the distance was restricted to little more than a dozen miles, and apart from the coach-load, a party of cyclists would set off at an earlier hour for the country chapel—Knutsford, Walmsley, Styal or Ainsworth. In recent years visits have been made to Chester, Ansdell and Southport.

When the Pendleton minister moved to Altrincham during the war, he wondered whether the Visiting Sunday scheme would work well with a congregation that was not situated like York Street or Pendleton in the heart of an industrial and commercial area, from which an escape to the quiet of a country meeting house would be a visit to utterly different surroundings. Altrincham is a country town that has become a suburb of Manchester but is itself still on the edge of unspoilt open country. While the war lasted no experiment was tried, but not very long afterwards a visit was made to Knutsford, a distance of seven miles only, and not requiring special transport as there was a good train service (Petrol rationing was still in force). Only a small party made the journey, but next year a much larger party visited Dean Row, and this time a motor coach was possible and after that the day became a popular institution. After the minister had assumed the oversight of Wythenshawe congregation Altrincham and Wythenshawe have joined forces for the annual visit holding a united evening service at Altrincham after a united tea. The day's fellowship has brought about many introductions which have been of lasting value to the congregations taking part. We have realised both the differences in congregational traditions and the likelinesses, and we feel an increasing family spirit in our movement. It makes General Assembly Sunday more real, because we can actually picture so many of the congregations that form the General Assembly.

When York Street started the movement, it was expected that the visits would be returned. And in Ireland this has constantly happened; country congregations after welcoming a morning visit have closed in the evening to attend some service at the City Church but in England where conditions are a little different, only one return visit has been recorded—that of Hale Banns to Pendleton for an evening service many years ago.

Other congregations in England while not making "Visiting

unday" an annual event, have rranged exchange visits. At Macclesfield, the Rev. H. Lismer hort from time to time took his ongregation to visit another, usually n the evening, and his choir usually ontributed an unaccompanied nthem. These visits would be eturned. Petrol rationing may gain make a "Visiting Sunday" ifficult; but it has never yet been llowed to make it impossible.



UNITARIAN STALWARTS

No. 33. T. L. Thomas, of West Kirby

At a recent social gathering of Vest Kirby Unitarians, T. L. Thomas, as chairman of the congregation, was called upon to make a resentation to an organist who had ust resigned after serving the hurch well for many years. He emarked that on such occasions he sually found himself with three peeches, the one he thought out n advance, the one he actually delivered, and the one that occurred o him afterwards. In his casual emark he revealed a deep aspect of is nature, for he is a consummate peaker who seems to have at least hree speeches ready for every gathering. A lover of words beautifully spoken, he seeks after the right word, and when he has found it reveals his Welsh ancestry in its pronunciation. A great teller of humorous tales. When Unitarian bodies have tired in the robust activities of organised games he will stand up and tell his latest story to the great refreshment of their minds.

He is deeply concerned with the social implications of religion. His belief in social justice has not always been confirmed by his knowledge of banking. For many years he presided at the meetings of a discussion group which met in our West Kirby Church to consider social and religious issues, and included some remarkable people, notably the late Olaf Stapledon. A lover of the theatre who appreciates fine acting, he has himself played many parts with the Liverpool Centenary Players.

Having attended our Ullet Road Church in boyhood and youth, he entered the rare category of "universal" Unitarians, when, having settled down in the Wirral, he became a devoted member of our West Kirby Church.

Cultured, kindly and generous, he goes quietly through life. In an age when so much living is by proxy, at a time when the endemic disease is spectatoritis, he is nourished by his own thoughts and feeling, an example of what religion can do to integrate and inspire a man.

BRADFORD. The Jubilee of BROADWAY AVENUE Church was celebrated during the autumn with a month of special services. Among the visiting preachers were the Rev. B. L. Golland, M.A., of Leeds, and the former minister, the Rev. Dudley Richards, B.A., B.D., whose ministry during and after the war for eleven years set the pattern of development at Broadway Avenue.

HIBBERT HOUSES

By Griffith J. Sparham

Hibbert Houses have now two centres operating in Cyprus. One is a small canteen in a rather dismal little army camp in the Nicosia area. The other is our main Club which comprises full canteen service, library, lounge, bookshop, chapel, social room and so on. This one is on the R.A.F. Station, Nicosia, the strength of which has until recently never been more than 600, but is now 6,000, and so has become the largest R.A.F. station in the world.

When it is realised that the personnel under conditions now prevailing in Cyprus are confined to camp except when they go out on duty, and that apart from NAAFI and the station cinema they would have no place of resort if there were no Hibbert House, you will understand why Hibbert House is so often packed out. This means heavy work for us, not infrequently from 7.30 in the morning to 10.30 at night.

Among all the other welfare organisations comprising Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., C. of E. Institute. Church of Scotland Huts, etc., the senior on this island is Hibbert House, as we have worked here for nine years and the others arrived within the last two years. The position of the Unitarian organisation doing welfare work is that of doyen, which is something to be proud of.

Six times a week we take mobile bookstalls to six different army camps, a visit a week to each. Every day in addition to our static canteens we send out two mobile canteens. The only exception is on Sundays. This means as one item of activity the cutting of about 2,000 sandwich-rolls daily! The bookshop service through which we supply a good and varied quality of literature is extremely popular, as is also the library.

IT PASSES TIME ON

By Joyce Hazlehurst

Some time ago, on a bus, I heard one woman passenger say to another, about a whist drive they planned to attend, "Oh, well, it passes time on." Which is worse, I wondered: having too much time or —my own experience—too little? I soon came to the conclusion that it was worse to have too much, for that meant boredom and lack of zest for living.

I believe there are three main classes of people who find time heavy on their hands. The first are the bereaved. "How am I going to get through the rest of my life?" is a question often asked after the passing of a loved one. The second class are the people who are unhappy in their homes or in their work. The perpetual friction or frustration deprives them of all joy. They rub along from day to day with nothing to look forward to. The third class are those who through a faulty education, have stunted creative powers and cannot entertain themselves. They are afraid of their own company. For all these classes and many more, it is a problem sometimes how to "pass time on."

What solution is there? To realise that God means us to make the best of the precious time that He has given us. Perhaps we should be grappling with our difficulties more boldly. Often we suffer in silence, when even a talk with a friend would help. Sometimes we could be busier than we are in caring for others; in dressing their wounds we might feel our own pain less. Certainly, we are all happier when caught up in a purpose larger than ourselves—which is where a church comes in.

"Eternal God, who committest to us the swift and solemn trust of life, since we know not what a day may

bring forth, but only that the hour for serving thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of thy holy will; not waiting for to-morrow, but yielding to-day."

Who were those strangers in church this morning? Heavens! they're not strangers, they're trustees.

NEWS AND VIEWS

BRIDPORT. The Christmas Bazaar raised over £132 for the organ fund, and the organ was re-opened at the Christmas Carol service on December 23rd. During the week of united Prayer in January a service was held in the chapel on January 11th conducted by the minister, with the Rev. S. E. Willson (Methodist) as preacher.

BRISTOL. The first stage of the restoration of Lewin's Mead Meeting has been completed at a cost of £4,628, with a balance of £362 for the next stage to be undertaken at some future date.

CLIFTON. A new compact two-manual organ was dedicated at a service on November 25th, but the Minister-Emeritus, Rev. J. Tyssul Davis, was taken ill at the last moment, and his dedication address was read by the minister, the Rev. A. H. Birtles. The Christmas Sale realised £75.

CREWKERNE. The November Sale realised £50. The congregation provided stewards along with the Lay Pastor, Mrs. M. R. Dickin, for the Bible Society exhibition, and Mrs. Dickin conducted evening prayers on the last day. Two Sunday School members won drawing prizes in connection with the exhibition.

CULLOMPTON. On December 23rd the Sunday School children conducted the Christmas service, being carefully trained by Mrs. Russ and Mrs. Hardy. £16 was raised for Church Funds by a Jumble Sale.

DUKINFIELD. At the request of the Chapel Committee, the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, B.Litt., M.A., is giving a course of evening sermons on the Liberal Christian faith throughout January and February.

EXETER. Notice has been served on the Chapel trustees that the forecourt of George's Chapel and part of the front steps must be ceded for road-widening purposes. The committee has taken active steps to preserve as much of the amenities of the building and its approach as possible.

GLOUCESTER. A December Social and Stall raised £10 which has defrayed most of the cost of new curtains in the Chapel Room which were made and hung by a member of the congregation.

HINCKLEY Sunday School on the week-end of their Christmas party again entertained twelve children from Leicestershire County Homes as their guests for the week-end. Gifts for children in the homes were brought to the Christmas Tree service. A collection of King Edward VII and Queen Victoria pennies and half-pennies for Chapel Funds has been started, and has reached £1 4s. 5d.

COALVILLE. The congregation, like the sister congregation at Hinckley, has started a collection for church funds of King Edward VII and Queen Victoria pennies and half-pennies. The recently announced total was £1 6s. 10d.

LEEDS. The children have held a Christmas party for orphans from a home in the district. The Chapel and Choir have said farewell with much regret to Mr. Bates, the organist, who has taken a post in the Midlands.

LIVERPOOL. Arrangements have been made to start a morning "children's church." The 1956 Gift Day has received the highest total of donations for Church funds on record, over £222.

LONDON. ILFORD church hall was packed for the December bazaar, and the total receipts, a record for very many years, was over £111. Donations of £33 came from far and near including friends at Bournemouth, Brighton, Folkestone and Hampstead. RICHMOND church celebrated the 68th anniversary of the congregation and the Diamond Jubilee of the present building in Ormond Road, on November 18th. A publicity campaign has been carried out, with special sermons by the Rev. W. M. Long, and considerable interest has been shown.

MANCHESTER. BLACKLEY Sunday School this year substituted a pantomime party for the traditional New Year's Day school party. Y.P.L. members are taking part in the newly devised Sunday School plan for MIDDLETON Sunday School. ALTRINCHAM Sunday School members presented a Nativity Play in Chapel on the evening of December 23rd, and a carol party raised £9 15s. on two damp evenings, visiting private houses, nursing homes and hotels. PENDLETON Nativity Play was again written and produced by church members. PLATT CHAPEL has sold its Sunday School premises which have been for many years a considerable liability as the cost of maintenance has been exorbitant. For the present the Sunday School is managing with the Chapel premises, but it is hoped in time to build close to the Chapel.

NORTH AND EAST LANCASHIRE LAY PREACHERS' ASSOCIATION. The 4th annual gathering of members and their families was held at Halliwell Road, Bolton, on December 15th. A coach from Rochdale travelled via Bacup, Rawtenstall and Bury. Mr. J. Sisson, of Newchurch, opened the Business Meeting with prayer, and Mr. W. L. Naylor, of Blackpool, presided. Mrs. F. Sisson (Newchurch) was elected president, and Mrs. F. Wager (Preston) vice-president. Next year's meeting is to be held at Preston. It was agreed to pay full expenses of members attending the Easter School at Oxford in 1957. Reports showed that since the association was formed 629 services have been booked under its auspices. Fees of £329 were spent mainly in travelling expenses. No member has any financial gain. After an excellent tea the service of affirmation was held, those taking part were Mr. E. Hatton, Mr. J. Wallwork, Mr. D. Mills, with Mr. W. L. Naylor as preacher. Afterwards the members joined the Boy Scouts at their dance before returning home.

PLYMOUTH. The Youth Fellowship was responsible for the conduct of evening service on November 11th, Mrs. Ellacott giving the address. One member played the organ, another sang a solo and two more conducted the service. The November Sale of Work realised £53.

SIDMOUTH. £10 has been sent to the Hungarian Relief Fund and a concert in aid of it was arranged by the organist, Mr. G. Winston Knight in December. At the Women's League Christmas Party to which all chapel members and friends were invited, a successful feature was a Dress Show of 18th and 19th century gowns and bonnets. There was a bountiful supper and a beautifully decorated Christmas tree.

STOCKPORT. £266 was raised at the annual Bazaar. The Rev. J. R. Blackburn gave an informative talk on Christmas Carols at the December meeting of the Women's League.

TODMORDEN. A junior branch of the Y.P.L. has been started and an active campaign to increase the membership of the Church has been begun. A new series of Sunday School lessons has been devised, to culminate in a Pageant of Unitarianism for the School Anniversary. The School has started weekly collections to defray the cost of a film strip projector and other visual aids and equipment.

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Mr. W. Broom, of Cullompton, was presented with a fountain pen to mark 45 years as chapel secretary.

Mr. Charles E. Booth, of Ullet Road Church, Liverpool, a most active member of the church, and of the Liverpool District Missionary Association, and also of the Boy Scout movement, has left Liverpool for the South of England after receiving presentations.

The Rev. R. E. Goddard, of Hinckley and Coalville, is going to Hackney in March.

The Rev. F. W. Barr has become minister at Rochdale.

The Rev. F. D. Jones of Carlisle and the Rev. E. G. Green, B.A., of Southend, have retired from the active ministry.

The Rev. W. Davies, of Rhydygwin, is going to Cefn Coed; the Rev. W. Priestley Phillips, M.A., is going to Buxton and Flagg; the Rev. Gordon Beverley, of Aberdeen, is going to Park Lane, Bryn, near Wigan, and the Rev. P. C. Whiteman, B.A., of Coseley, is going to Dover.

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The weekly organ of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
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CHILDREN'S CORNER

An Apology

The Editor is very sorry that this month the story for the corner has gone astray. It is very unfortunate, as the Editor himself is dying to know what the Mayor wanted Sammy to do. Next month we shall find out.

FRIENDSHIP

We do not "make" our friends—
we find them only
When they have waited for us
weary years;
Someday we wander forth a little
lonely
When, lo, a comrade at our side
appears.
'Tis not "discovery," 'tis recognition.
A glance, a greeting and we grasp
the hand
No explanation needed, no condition—
That we are friends, at once we
understand.
And if our paths divide, if we must
sever,
Eye turn away and clinging hands
must part,
It matters not, for we are friends
for ever,
Distance may darken but not hush
the heart.
We serve them out of eager love—
not duty,
And none so safe as he whom love
defends
The tender words of Christ assume
new beauty—
"Henceforth not Servants, I have
called you Friends."

R.E.G.

TORQUAY. £83 was raised at the Christmas Fair at which a very friendly and happy spirit prevailed.

THE UNITARIAN, published by Manchester District Association of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. Annual subscription 4/-. Monthly orders, 50 copies 7/6, 100 copies 10/6 plus postage. *Business Manager:* G. HARRISON, 83, Mitford St., Stretford, M/cr. *Editor:* Rev. A. W. VALLANCE, Dunham Road Parsonage, Altrincham, Cheshire.

Northern Sunday School Federation

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